

Serial No. 10/604,049
Filed: June 24, 2003
Page 6 of 8

Examiner: S. Huang
Group Art Unit: 2632

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 were in the application as examined and remain in the application for further examination and reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1 and 16 are amended, full support therefore being found in the specification. No new matter is added by the amendments. It is noted that claims with similar elements have been found patentable in the U.K.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 to 10 and 12 to 22 stand rejected as anticipated by Maple et al (GB2353425A). It is noted that two of the inventors of Maple et al. are the inventors of the present application. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Maple et al. describes a system for ensuring the integrity of goods carried within a goods compartment as, for example, in a commercial vehicle. This security is achieved by the system monitoring the geographical location of the vehicle and permitting unlocking of the doors only when the vehicle is at a pre-programmed location. Further, should an attempt be made to open the vehicle when away from that location, the system monitors the attempt and gives an indication the next time the goods compartment is to be opened. Nowhere in Maple et al. is it contemplated that the system should operate other than by one kind or another of location verifying mean, usually by the Global Positioning System (GPS).

By contrast, the invention of the present case ensures the integrity of a seal for a goods compartment as, for example, in a commercial vehicle, but without being tied to a location verifying means such as the GPS.

Claims 1 and 16 have been amended to make it clear that the geographical location of the compartment is unrelated to the security afforded by the system. Rather, sealing of the goods compartment is performed solely by an authorized person using a security key. As noted in the specification, the validity of the key expires shortly after removal from the location at which the compartment is loaded, allowing just sufficient time to seal the compartment. Maple et al. does not disclose the first input device being in the form of a security switch operable solely by means

Serial No. 10/604,049
Filed: June 24, 2003
Page 7 of 8

Examiner: S. Huang
Group Art Unit: 2632

of an authorized user and without verifying the geographical location of the compartment. Thus, there is no anticipation of claims 1 and 16 by Maple et al.

Regarding claim 2, the Examiner appears to have misunderstood the disclosure on page 12, lines 8 and 9 of Maple et al. This passage is concerned with unusual operation, when the system was not properly sealed following loading of a goods compartment. The normal operation in Maple et al. is for the compartment to be sealed merely by pressing a push-button to indicate loading has been completed; no special key is required for this action. This may be contrasted with claim 2, which expressly recites that the first input device is key-operated solely by means of an authorized user having the appropriate key.

Claims 3 to 10 and claims 12 to 15 are all dependent either directly or indirectly on claim 1. Further, claims 17 to 22 are all dependent directly or indirectly on claim 16. Since claims 1 and 16 as amended are not anticipated by Maple et al., these claims are likewise not anticipated for the same reasons as claims 1 and 16.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 11 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Maple et al., though taken on its own and not in combination with any other document. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Maple et al. is concerned solely with systems which employ geographical location means (such as GPS) in order to give the required security for a goods compartment of a commercial vehicle. By contrast, this invention places absolutely no reliance on the geographical location of a vehicle, and the system is able to operate without reference to GPS or indeed any other location means. As such, it is submitted that the teachings of Maple et al. are not relevant to this application since Maple teaches away from any system which does not rely on geographical location means.

Serial No. 10/604,049
Filed: June 24, 2003
Page 8 of 8

Examiner: S. Huang
Group Art Unit: 2632

Conclusion

Having regard to all of the foregoing, it is requested that the examiner reconsiders the objections in the light of the amended claims and early allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

ALAN JAMES MAPLE AND IAN MARTIN LENNARD

Dated: 3/15/05

By: 

Joel E. Bair, Reg. No. 33,356
McGARRY BAIR P.C.
171 Monroe Avenue, NW, Suite 600
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
616-742-3500

G0161151